(c) and (d) There is no provision for reservation for SC/ST category under compassionate appointments. Provision to hold back upto 5% of vacancies falling under direct recruitment quota in any group 'C' or 'D' posts for filling such vacancies by appointment on compassionate ground exists. The details of compassionate appointment made for SC/ST category and pending cases are as follows:

	Appointments made		Cases Pending	
	Group 'C'	Group 'D'	Group 'C'	Group 'D'
SC	—	3	2	—
ST	—	1	2	—
TOTAL :	—	4	4	—

Rail reservation centres at Rajouri and Poonch

*470. MIRZA ABDUL RASHID: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Rajouri and Poonch are two sensitive border districts in Jammu Division of J and K;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to open two railway ticket reservation centres at Rajouri and Poonch District headquarters for extending the facilities to the far flung areas and for connecting these two border districts with the rest of the country through computer system; and

(c) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir, as reported by Minister of Home Affairs.

(b) Government has already sanctioned reservation facility at Rajouri. As regards provision of computerised reservation facility at Poonch, there is no proposal under consideration of the Government at present.

(c) The computerised reservation facility at Rajouri will be commissioned when the necessary infrastructure like accommodation, communication channels and electrification is ready.

WTO negotiations on agriculture

*471. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that at a recent Chief Ministers' Conference, the States asked for their close involvement in the forthcoming WTO negotiations on the agreement on agriculture;

(b) whether the Centre has also been approached that the States should be involved in all decisions on agriculturists and the rural population, especially in areas like export and import policy, tariffs on imports and taxation on agricultural commodities; and

(c) if so, what is the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. In the Conference of Chief Ministers held on 21st May, 2001 some State Governments did ask for greater involvement of States in matters relating to WTO negotiations, revision of import tariffs on agricultural products etc.

Government of India have taken a series of steps to involve all the stakeholders including States in these matters including the following:

- Regional and national level consultations with farmers, NGOs and State Government representatives were held jointly by the Ministry of Agriculture and Department of Commerce at Calcutta, Cochin, Ahmedabad and Delhi to apprise them about WTO matters and to get their inputs for the negotiations;
- Chief Secretaries of All State Governments were addressed by Department of Commerce inviting their inputs on the ongoing negotiations on WTO Agreement on Agriculture and Services;
- A meeting was convened by the Agriculture Minister of all political parties NGOs and farmers' representatives, as well as Ministers for Food and Agriculture from States on 13th and 14th September, 2000 on WTO Agreement on Agriculture;
- The Commerce & Industries Minister had written to all political parties and State Chief Ministers in October, 2000 requesting for their inputs for preparing India's Negotiating Proposals;
- Meetings of State Chief Secretaries were held at Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi on 19th March, and 26th July, 2001 for evolving future strategies on WTO negotiations;
- The Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Agriculture have also organized Seminars/Workshops on WTO Agreement on Agriculture in several State Capitals, in collaboration with the respective States as part of awareness-building measures.

The Prime Minister convened the Chief Ministers' Conference on WTO Agreement on Agriculture as part of the effort to involve States in the on-going negotiations. The Conference provided an opportunity for frank exchange of views and sharing of concerns and suggestions. In line with suggestions from several States, the Prime Minister announced the constitution of a Standing Committee of Union Ministers and Chief Ministers to consider issues concerning agricultural strategies, food management and promotion of agricultural exports in the wake of WTO Agreement on Agriculture.

Abolition of Non-formal Education System

*472. SHRI K. M. KHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the system of non-formal education, introduced to cater to the needs of drop-out students at the elementary level, has been abolished;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have decided to introduce some innovative scheme of education, instead of Non-formal Education Scheme; and

(d) if so, the details therefor and its rate of success so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) to (d) The scheme of Non-formal Education was evaluated, among others, by Programme Evaluation Organisation of Planning Commission and Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development. Based on their recommendations and the experiences of implementing agencies, the scheme has been revised as "Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative & Innovative Education" (EGS&AIE) and made operational w.e.f. 1.4.2001. The revised scheme has three broad strategies, viz.

(i) setting up of alternative schools in school-less habitations (EGS) with in a radius of 1 K.M.

(ii) interventions for mainstreaming of 'out of school' children through bridge courses, back to school camps, etc. and

(iii) strategies for very specific, difficult groups of children who cannot be mainstreamed.